

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 L-01 PRS-01 PM-03
SP-02 H-01 EB-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00
/042 W

-----260207Z 112263 /75-70

R 251800Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4924

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 1945

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, EFIN, JM

SUBJECT: POLITICAL SHIFTS AND STRUGGLES WITHIN JAMAICAN CABINET
AND JAMAICA'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

REFERENCE: KINGSTON 1769

1. REFTEL REPORTED DOUGLAS FLETCHER'S (FORMER JAMAICAN
AMBASSADOR TO US) ASSERTION THAT MODERATES WITHIN GOJ CABINET
AND PNP HEIRARCHY NOW IN THE ASCENDENCY, AND THAT THE RADICAL
LEFT IS NOW ISOLATED. DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH
CHARGE APRIL 22 FLETCHER FLESHED OUT THOSE ASSERTIONS.

2. FLETCHER CLAIMED THAT JAMAICA'S PRESENT ECONOMIC CRISIS
CAN IN VERY LARGE MEASURE BE ATTRIBUTED TO PM MANLEY HAVING
LET HIS RADICAL LEFT, BUT ESPECIALLY D.K. DUNCAN, EXERCISE
DECISIVE INFLUENCE ON MANY KEY GOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS AND
STRATEGIES FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. THE SHIFT TO
THE LEFT WAS PARTICULARLY DRAMATIC IN THE MONTHS
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IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DECEMBER 15 GENERAL ELECTIONS
GIVEN THE APPOINTMENT OF A NUMBER OF PNP RADICALS TO
KEY MINISTERIAL AND OTHER POSITIONS. THE ONE EXCEPTION
TO THIS GENERALIZATION WAS THE REMOVAL OF DUDLEY
THOMPSON AS FOREIGN MINISTER AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY
P.J. PATTERSON. THIS WAS THE RESULT OF A CONSCIOUS
DECISION BY MANLEY -- MADE EVEN BEFORE THE ELECTIONS

-- TO ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE USG
BECAUSE OF THE NEED FOR EXPANDED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

3. THE SERIES OF "RHETORICAL AND ACTUAL LURCHES TO
THE LEFT" WHICH EMERGED IN THE FIRST MONTHS OF 1977
FINALLY RESULTED IN THE MODERATE FACTION OF THE
CABINET AND PNP REVOLTING AT THE RECENT PNP CONFERENCES
IN OCHO RIOS AND MANDEVILLE. MANLEY WENT ALONG
WITH THE MODERATES -- IN PART BECAUSE IT HAD BECOME
CLEAR TO HIM THAT NEITHER THE RADICAL LEFT HERE "NOR
THE CUBANS AND RUSSIANS" HAD ANY READY SOLUTIONS TO
JAMAICA'S IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. THESE PROBLEMS REQUIRED
A RETURN TO MORE TRADITIONAL SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE,
INCLUDING THE IMF AND THE USG, AND THAT IN TURN
REQUIRED MORE MODERATE MEASURES WITHIN JAMAICA
THAN DESIRED BY THE LEFT.

4. FLETCHER ADDED AT THIS POINT THAT THE FOREIGN
EXCHANGE CRISIS IS NOW SO SEVERE THAT HIS SON (RICHARD
FLETCHER, MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING IN THE
MINISTRY OF FINANCE -- WD THE MINISTER PRIMARILY
RESPONSIBLE FOR PULLING TOGETHER THE EMERGENCY PRODUCTION
PLAN) HAS SAID TO HIM SEVERAL TIMES THAT THE GOJ IN
ALL LIKELIHOOD WILL HAVE TO DEFAULT ON A NUMBER OF
GOVERNMENTAL FOREIGN OBLIGATIONS IN EARLY SUMMER -- UNLESS
NEW LOANS ARE ARRANGED IMMEDIATELY.

5. TURNING BACK TO THE POSITION OF THE RADICALS, HE
SAID THAT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, DUNCAN (MINISTER OF
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NATIONAL MOBILIZATION AND PNP SECRETARY), SPAULDING
(MINISTER OF HOUSING), AND SMALL (MINISTER FOR YOUTH
AND SPORTS) ARE TO ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES ISOLATED.
"EVEN ARNOLD BERTRAM HAS GONE OVER TO THE MODERATES
AND DUDLEY THOMPSON IS PLAYING HIS USUAL OPPORTUNISTIC
GAME BY NOW SIDING WITH THE MODERATES".

6. FLETCHER ALSO COMMENTED THAT PUBLIC EVIDENCE OF
THE TIGHT CONTROLS PLACED ON THE RADICALS IS THE FACT
THAT DUNCAN, SMALL, AND SPAULDING HAVE DROPPED ALMOST
COMPLETELY OUT OF SIGHT SINCE THE OCHO RIOS
CONFERENCE. PREVIOUS TO THAT CONFERENCE, DUNCAN WAS
MAKING HEADLINES ALMOST DAILY THROUGH A HECTIC SCHEDULE
OF PUBLIC MEETINGS WHICH OFFERED UP A STEADY DIET OF
"EXTREMIST RHETORIA". HE ALSO SAID THAT IT WAS
INTERESTING THAT DUNCAN WAS NOT PRESENT AT THAT
MORNING'S OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL,
AND FPJ THE LATTER'S "SPEECH FROM THE THRONE". (NOTE:
THE OPPOSITION ALSO BOYCOTTED THE MORNING SESSION.

THE OPPOSITION WAS PRESENT FOR PM MANLEY'S PRESENTATION OF THE EMERGENCY PRODUCTION PLAN LATER THAT SAME DAY, BUT DUNCAN WAS AGAIN ABSENT.)

7. COMMENT: FLETCHER'S ACCOUNT OF THE STATE OF THE LEFT/MODERATE STRUGGLE FITS OTHER INFORMATION WE HAVE. HIS COMMENT ON THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE RADICALS FROM THE PUBLIC SCENE IS ALSO ACCURATE, AS IS THAT ON THE VERY NOTICEABLE FALLOFF OF RADICAL RHETORIC. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO WRITE OFF DUNCAN AND COMPANY IN TERMS OF EITHER THEIR DAY-TO-DAY INFLUENCE ON PM MANLEY, NOR WITH RESPECT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR EARLY REEMERGENCE AS MAJOR POWER FIGURES. SHOULD THE PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE (AS WE EXPECT IT WILL), AND MORE TRADITIONAL SOLUTIONS AND SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE FAIL TO WORK MIRACLES, THE RADICALS WILL ASSERT (AS
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THEY UNDOUBTEDLY NOW PLAN) THAT IT IS TIME FOR NEW AND RADICAL SOLUTIONS.
DORRANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, OPPOSITION PARTIES, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KINGST01945
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770144-0382
Format: TEL
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770424/aaaaatwc.tel
Line Count: 142
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9e3b969f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 KINGSTON 1769
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2707555
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL SHIFTS AND STRUGGLES WITHIN JAMAICAN CABINET AND JAMAICA'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, EFIN, JM
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9e3b969f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009